

The KeyNote



Newsletter of the Americas Chapter, FISTS CW Club—The International Morse Preservation Society
Issue 3, 2025

Receive-Side Code Capture

Bryan Bergeron

I have two small drawers in my shack for keys and keyers collected over my lifetime. The first is for straights—from my first stamped steel Radio Shack straight key from China to a massive sculpture arrow from Bengali Keys in Italy. The second drawer is home to iambics—from my first USA-made Vibroplex to a delicate German-made “Morse Tashen” from Scheunemann. Each key has a story as well as a personality. Some support slow, detailed conversation, while others want nothing more than whipping out ‘CQ Contest’ and a short repost before searching for more targets.

However, my dance with Morse code wasn’t limited to the particular key I had in hand at a given moment. Even after I could copy the entire QSO in my head, I made a written record of the encounter. Tracing my footsteps from Novice to Expert, the paper and pen or pencil I used to take notes also migrated with time. At first, it was a No. 2 pencil and spiral bound notebook. At some point, the pencil was replaced with a 19 cent Bic pen from France—the kind with the caps that are always getting lost, and the school paper became a yellow legal pad.

Enter the keyboard—for both send and receive—and I put away the paper and pens as well as the keys. With the proper software, I could make five QSO’s in the time it took me to manually record a single QSO in my official ARRL Logbook.

Then, about 30 years ago, it became fashionable to take written notes at high-level meetings. Notebooks glistening with starched sheets from

Germany, France and Japan became the norm, as did pens and even fountain pens from Germany, Italy and Japan. Of course, I became swept up in this world, every month of so ordering the next new shade of black-green or blue from the likes of Pilot, Waterman, Pelikan, and Sailor.

And then there were the combinations. Rhodia (France) and Palamino Blackwing pencils (Japan) and gel ink pens with Rhodia paper. Fountain pens from Germany with Clairefontaine paper from France. Japanese fountain pens and modern ink pens with Tomoe River paper from Japan.

I found this “detour” from ham radio synergistic. I look forward to long QSOs using my latest favorite straight or iambic key, paper and pen combination. Perhaps you’ve gone down the same rabbit hole? If so, let me and the other readers share your experiences.

73, Bryan, NU1N

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“When you’ve worked a FISTS, you’ve worked a friend.”

INFORMATION PAGE

When you have a question about FISTS, go to the source for the correct answer. Posting a question on a chat room or email reflector may yield the answer, but your best bet is to ask a FISTS volunteer or look in the reference issue. Several volunteer contacts and/or email addresses have changed from the last reference issue of *The KeyNote*. Please make note of the following listings.

When emailing a volunteer please put the word FISTS in the title of your email. This will help the volunteer recognize that your email is important and not spam.

Awards and Certificates

Dennis Franklin, K6DF, awards@fistsna.org
4658 Capitan Dr., Fremont, CA 94536-5448

Club Call, KN0WCW

“Vacant”

If interested email to:

Joe Falcone, N8TI, store@fistsna.org

Membership Questions; Renewals; Call Changes; Name, Mailing, and Email Address Changes

Dennis Franklin, K6DF, membership@fistsna.org
4658 Capitan Dr., Fremont, CA 94536-5448

FISTS Store Manager

Joe Falcone, N8TI, store@fistsna.org
9880 Musch Road, Brighton, MI 48116-8215

Activities Manager

“Vacant”

If interested email to:

Joe Falcone, N8TI, store@fistsna.org

Website Changes (including getting your personal or club web page linked)

Dennis Franklin, K6DF, webmaster@fistsna.org
4658 Capitan Dr., Fremont, CA 94536-5448

Code Buddy Volunteers and Buddies

<http://www.fistsna.org/codebuddy.php>

FISTS Sprints

Ashley Lambe, KX4ASH

E-logs to sprintlogs@fistsna.org

Mail Logs to: FISTS Sprint Logs

4305 Roundwood Ct.

Indian Trail, NC 28079-6793

The KeyNote Newsletter

Bryan Bergeron, NU1N, keynote@fistsna.org

We need articles and reviews for *The KeyNote*!

NOTE: Image files need to be high resolution
JPGs (at least 1000 pixels wide).

Send your Word or text files to
keynote@fistsna.org

The KeyNote

The Newsletter of the Americas Chapter of FISTS

Issue 3, 2025

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Send articles to:

keynote@fistsna.org

Production: Sandra Lindemann

President's message

By Joe Falcone, N8TI

The fall weather is upon us. This summer, while nice to see the Northern Lights, it has been rough on the upper bands. Many of us could not wait for the top of the sunspot cycle and for 20 meters to open up. However, many times during the day 20 meters was just all noise.

That did not mean that the lower bands were not cooking. Early mornings were very nice for 40 meters, although it did not get the distance that 20 meters was supposed to. 30 meters, however, seemed to be always good, other than it just is not as busy as it should be.

30 meters is a heck of a band. It has a lower noise level than 20 meters (most of the time), and travels further than 40 meters. The really nice thing about 30 meters is that it is only for digital, including CW. SSB is not allowed. It is like having your own private band to work CW on.

Now, if you go above 10.125 MHz, you will run into the computer generated digital signals. But, they do not usually go below 10.125 MHz. Most CW operators will work between 10.110 MHz and 10.120 MHz. And, as I am sure you know, contesting is not allowed by a "gentlemen's agreement" among hams. What this means is that you can operate CW during those contests that you may not be participating in.

I am always surprised that more people are not on 30 meters. It is the place where you can call CQ and have a ragchew or make contacts

and not be squeezed out by other operators. While at times, 10.110 MHz through 10.120 MHz will be crowded, the space between 10.120 MHz and 10.125 MHz always has a lot of room, given that CW does not take up very much space, there is always room on 30 meters.

There are, of course, other WARC bands, such as 12 and 17 meter, but they may have the same noise problems as 20 meters. It seems to me that 12 and 17 meters used to be busier "back in the day." I am not sure why this is, given that all the radios manufactured from 1980 on have those bands on them.

Of course, there are people who love 17 and 12 meters and who call them their favorite bands. So, maybe I am not on them at the right times. I used to love 17 meters and there was a lot of activity on those bands. It would be great if things picked up on that band.

There is something that is showing a lot of activity, and that is CW key manufacturing. At one time, you did not have a very broad choice in CW keys. Of course Vibroplex was always there and Bencher keys were and are very good. Now, however, it seems that a lot of people are manufacturing CW keys that are really fabricated to the highest standards. Apparently, the cost of CNC machines to fabricate metal parts has fallen to a point where small businesses can get into key making. For example, CW Morse makes a CNC machined aluminum portable set of CW paddles and it is really nice. The newer keys are very well put together.

(continued on page 6)

FISTS AWARDS

By Dennis K6DF

Congratulations to all who earned operating awards from May 23, 2025 to Aug 24, 2025.

Award certificates are available, from the Members Area of the Americas Chapter website, for members to download to their own computer for printing. A list of awards issued to your call/member-number is available in the Members Area. FISTS members may log into the Members Area from the following web page:

<https://fistsna.org/memlogon.php>

New Members can earn a free FISTS Club Key Patch during the first year of their membership for making their first 10-minute CW QSO with any FISTS member on any band. Be sure to get on the air and make your first 10-minute QSO with a FISTS member to earn your free KEY Patch!

New Member Patches Earned:

AD2KL Heng—QSO with KG2RG

We have a list of new members shown elsewhere in this issue of the *Keynote*. Please listen for them on the bands and help them to earn their FISTS Key Patch!

Award certificates are available free to all club members, in PDF format, so get out your favorite key and get on the air. You can also use the free “Log Converter” program to track your club awards, it’s also a good general logging program as well. The author of Log Converter, Graham G3ZOD, is constantly providing updates and improvements to the program. **This program was last updated on June 9, 2025 to version 4.9.0. If you are using a version older than this please update your program as older versions will not work properly due to recent server updates.**

This FREE software will track your FISTS awards automatically and allow you to send in your award logs to the FISTS Awards Manager at the click of a button! The best thing about it is . . . it’s FREE ! Log Converter is available for download on the Americas Chapter web site. Look for the download link on the main web page just below the “Welcome New Members” list.

Be sure to check the Americas Chapter web pages for updated awards information and how to apply for them:

<https://www.fistsna.org/awards.html>

If you have any award questions or suggestions, send e-mail to me at:

awards@fistsna.org

I wish you good DX during 2025.

73, Dennis K6DF ..._. ____ (30)

FISTS AWARDS ISSUED:

May 23, 2025–Aug 24, 2025

Basic Century: VP9KF, K9ID

Silver Century: VP9KF

Gold Century: VP9KF

Diamond Century: VP9KF

Platinum Award: F6JOE

Millionaire Award: VP9KF, DL6NAN

2, 3, 4 Million Award: VP9KF

5 Million Award: VP9KF, IU0ITX, G0FOZ

6 Million Award: VP9KF, M0NGN

7, 8, 9, 10, 11 Million Award: VP9KF

12 Million Award: VP9KF, KF0LI

13, 14, 15, 16, 17 Million Award: VP9KF

18, Million Award: VP9KF, AF5Z

(continued on page 6)

WELCOME NEW FISTS AMERICAS CHAPTER MEMBERS

Call	FISTS#	First Name	S/P/C	Call	FISTS#	First Name	S/P/C
AD2KL	23004	Heng	NY	KD9DXT	23041	Kevin	IN
KF8CKX	23005	Camden	OH	KK7VCP	23042	Andy	NV
AC9XK	23006	Alex	IN	KG5EED	23043	Jeff	TX
KG4EXY	23007	John	VA	W0YRE	23044	Ken	MN
KC3SCV	23008	Frank	PA	KD5DBP	23045	Doug	OK
W8TDE	23009	Roger	OH	KC9HEK	23046	Brian	NY
VA7FK	23010	Ben	BC	K4EL	23047	Gene	NC
KG6TSM	23011	Wes	CA	WT4DX	23048	Tem	TX
N5GUS	23012	Duane	IN	NE5TX	23049	David	TX
KS4CM	23013	Bill	GA	VA3CJW	23050	Chris	ON
AA1HM	23014	Bob	NH	AJ7CM	23051	Andy	WA
WR3G	23015	Nathan	VA	KJ5GWV	23052	Gary	NM
KM7BBA	23016	Tyler	OR	Silent Key List			
K3KDW	23017	Roe	MO				
AC3PD	23018	Jeff	MD	Call	FISTS#	First Name	S/P/C
KI5VPF	23019	Phil	TX	K4TXJ	1448	Jim	KY
W8CS	23020	Craig	SC	W0MYZ	2773	Al	MN
W7EV	23021	Eric	OR	KS0M	3067	Richard	MO
K4OHW	23022	Jim	TN	WA6HXM	2329	Peter	CA
N3PQ	23023	Munir	PA	N0JW	6386	Dick	CO
K9ID	23024	Ron	IL	NA7MT	6777	Joe	MT
NK3F	23025	Tom	FL	W3WOM	7206	John	PA
N4ACE	23026	Greg	MO	W6RLF	8581	Paul	CA
KQ4WRV	23027	Dan	SC	K2JHU	8637	John	FL
AJ6BC	23028	John	CA	WA8YCD	11101	Bob	WV
KB0ROW	23029	Bob	MN	KA6CPM	11571	Nicholas	CA
WB4DCW	23030	Mike	TN	W0NB	12372	Jim	IA
K7IIA	23031	John	AZ	K2ZD	12851	Mario	NJ
N2LEE	23032	Lee	FL	W0ERE	13318	Al	MO
KR6Q	23033	Demian	CA	K4VAG	13602	Dan	VA
TI8/AD2JK	23034	Dan	NJ	KM9U	16344	Chuck	IN
KA7MDY	23035	Bob	NV	W3GY	17151	Jack	PA
NX4N	23036	Chris	FL	KB9ON	17774	James	IL
KF0KXW	23037	Ben	MO	WB7DUO	19484	Greg	ID
N3CAA	23038	Corey	PA	WA4MCE	20796	Chuck	FL
W7SW	23039	Scotty	AZ				
VE3LTN	23040	Mike	ON				

President's message (continued)

Some of these keys are not inexpensive and I would never give up my 70 year old Vibroplex bug, but it is always fun to try out a new key. There are a lot of new guys on the band sending Morse Code nowadays and there is a lot of new equipment out there for CW operators CW is having a renaissance and it is a great time to get on the air.

Joe Falcone, N8TI

FISTS AWARDS (continued)

Spectrum 80m: G0FOZ

Spectrum 40m: VP9KF, G3WGE

Spectrum 20m: VP9KF

Spectrum 15m: VP9KF

Spectrum 17m: VP9KF

Perpetual Prefix: K9ID

Prefix 50: KF9LI, K9ID

Prefix 100: K9ID

QRO Category

Summer Saturday Sprint Results for August 9, 2025.

Callsign	Name	QTH	FISTS #	FISTS QSOs	Non-FISTS	Points	Multi	Bonus	Score
WB0CJB	Paul	TN	12460	16	11	102	14	250	1678
WB9HFK	Mark	IL	7606	7	6	47	11	0	517

QRP Category --- no logs received

Club Category --- no logs received

QRO Category

Summer Sunday Sprint Results for August 17, 2025.

Callsign	Name	QTH	FISTS #	FISTS QSOs	Non-FISTS	Points	Multi	Bonus	Score
WB0CJB	Paul	TN	12460	28	7	154	24	250	3946
WB9HFK	Mark	IL	7606	20	8	116	20	250	2570
K7TRT	Dave	MT	20232	4	0	20	4	0	80

QRP Category --- no logs received

Club Category --- no logs received

SPRINT INFORMATION

Sprints will be held eight times throughout the year on the second Saturday and third Sunday in each of the following months: Feb., May, Aug, and Nov. Sprints will now run over a 24-hour period.

OBJECTIVE:

To exchange specified information with as many FISTS members as possible using Morse Code only, and within the time frame stipulated. Sprints are a great opportunity for our newer members to get on the air, meet other club members, and have some fun! We encourage more experienced operators to please QRS to match the other operator's speed.

PARTICIPANTS:

Any properly licensed amateur radio operator, FISTS member or non-member is invited to take part in the contest. At least one of the two stations in each QSO must be a FISTS member.

DATES AND TIMES:

SATURDAY SPRINT: from 0000 UTC to 2359 UTC on second Saturday in Feb., May, Aug., and Nov.

SUNDAY SPRINT: from 0000 UTC to 2359 UTC on third Sunday in Feb., May, Aug., and Nov.

BANDS:

Operation is limited to the following amateur bands: 3.5, 7, 14, 21, and 28 MHz amateur bands. Look for other participants around the FISTS frequencies: 3558, 7058, 14058, 21058, and 28058 kHz. You may NOT work the same station more than once.

ENTRY CLASSES:

There are three entry classes: QRO, QRP, and Club.

1. **QRO:** Over 5 watts to legal limit.
2. **QRP:** 5 watts output power or less.
3. **Club:** (regardless of power).

Entry class **MUST** be shown on logs to be considered for entry in a particular class, or will be assumed QRO. An entry must be ONE class only, no combination of classes allowed.

EXCHANGE:

The following information must be exchanged by both stations and shown in your log for each QSO to count as a valid QSO:

FISTS members: RST, S/P/C, first name, FISTS number. *Non-FISTS members:* RST, S/P/C, first name. (Enter "0" Zero if your logging program requires a power entry for non-members.) S/P/C = U.S. State/Canadian Province/DXCC Country

DX COUNTRY STATUS:

U.S. states and Canadian provinces are those states and provinces that are contiguous and found within the North American continent. DX are those entities listed in the current ARRL DXCC publication, other than the above.

MULTIPLIERS:

Each U.S. state (50) and Canadian province (13) counts as 1 multiplier. Count each only once, no matter how many times worked. Each DXCC country counts as 1 multiplier. Count each only once, no matter how many times worked. Canada and the USA do not count as DX multipliers

BONUS POINTS:

If the submitted Sprint log has a total of 25 or more listed QSO's, a bonus of 250 points will be added to the final calculated score.

SCORING:

Each QSO with a FISTS member: 5 QSO points. Each QSO with a non-FISTS member: 2 QSO points. Final score is total QSO points times the number of multipliers worked, then Bonus points are added.

CERTIFICATES:

Certificates will be awarded to the first, second, and third place finishers in each Sprint for each Entry Class. End-of-Year Certificates will be awarded **ONLY** to FISTS members with the highest cumulative point totals in the QRO, QRP and Club categories for all Sprints at the end of the year. Certificate will be sent to the winners via email in PDF format.

Sprint Information (continued)

LOG SUBMISSIONS:

All log entries must be received within 7 days after the Sprint to be considered valid. Logs not sent to the proper address will not be considered for entry. The logs will be spot-checked for accuracy and correct scoring procedures. All logs **MUST** contain the following information for entry:

1. Your name, call sign, mailing address, and FISTS Number if a member.
2. Club name and call sign if entry is for a club station.
3. Sprint worked—Date of the Sprint worked.
4. Entry class—QRO, QRP, or Club.
5. Number of FISTS members worked.
6. Number of non-FISTS worked.
7. FISTS number for FISTS QSOs.
8. List of multipliers.
9. Your claimed score.

An entry form is available here and on the FISTS website at:

https://fistsna.org/pdfdocs/sprint_entry_form_rev2.pdf

ELECTRONIC LOGS:

We will accept electronic logs in standard Cabrillo or ASCII Text File format. If you're not sure about your format, please contact the Sprint Manager before the contest entry deadline. E-logs are sent to:

sprintlogs@fistsna.org ONLY.

PAPER LOGS:

Send log and entry form to:

FISTS Sprint Log
4305 Roundwood Ct.
Indian Trail, NC 28079

JAN. 1, 2021 CHANGES TO AMERICAS CHAPTER MEMBERSHIPS

All Americas Chapter memberships will be dues-free.

- Expired memberships were changed to Life memberships on Jan 1, 2021.
- Current paid memberships that expired were changed to Life memberships on their expiration date.
- All New Memberships received since April 2, 2020 are entered as Life memberships.

Details about printed/mailed newsletter subscriptions appeared in Issue #4, 2020 of the *KeyNote*, which is available on the FISTS website at:

www.fistsna.org/publickeynotes.php



FISTS SPRINT ENTRY FORM

Check Sprint Entered: Saturday _____ Sunday _____ Sprint Date _____

Entry Class: QRO _____ QRP _____ FISTS Club _____

Name _____ Call _____ FISTS # _____ Non Member _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

If Club, Club Name, Call _____ FISTS Nr. _____

E-mail Address (optional) _____

SCORING: Number of FISTS member QSOs: _____ $\times 5 =$ Total [A] _____
 Number of Non-FISTS QSOs: _____ $\times 2 =$ Total [B] _____
 Number of multipliers worked: _____ $=$ Total [C] _____

Add [A] to [B] and multiply by [C] to get your TOTAL CLAIMED SCORE = _____

CIRCLE WORKED MULTIPLIERS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	VE	DX
CT	NY	DE	AL	AR	CA	AZ	MI	IL	CO	NB	NF/LB
MA	NJ	MD	FL	LA		ID	OH	IN	IA	NS	NT
ME		PA	GA	MS		MT	WV	WI	KS	PE	YK
NH			KY	NM		NV			MN	QC	BC
RI			NC	OK		OR			MO	ON	
VT			SC	TX		UT			NE	MB	
			TN			WA			ND	SK	
			VA			WY			SD	AB	
						AK					

Please enclose paper logs ONLY, photos, comments, ideas, etc., with your entry and mail promptly to:

FISTS Sprint Logs
 4305 Roundwood Ct.
 Indian Trail, NC 28079

Statement: "I have observed all FISTS Sprint competition rules as well as all regulations for Amateur Radio in my country. My report is correct and true to the best of my knowledge. I agree to be bound by the decisions of the FISTS Awards Committee."

Date _____ Signature _____ Call sign _____

SOAPBOX COMMENTS: